2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mulungushi

On moonlight nights the girls play special games in the courtyard, such as 'Knock, knock, little man'; they put bits of banana leaves in the forks of the fingers and toes and sing: 'Knock, knock, little man; knock, knock, little woman!' Then they spread wide their arms and legs and fingers and toes and knock them together. The leaves that fall out when they do so are collected and hidden some distance away. Then they all separate and hunt for them, singing:

> 'We look for our fellow the barren one.
> I don't know where she is, the barren one.'

When they find the leaves they pile them up and then each snatches one, singing:

> 'Here she is, here she is!'

Then the game ends.

Another traditional song goes:

'Little mouth, little mouth, like-who-makes-her-friends-quarrel.'

But many of the songs the maids sing with the young men are just current popular songs.

'The maids are friends for the bride to amuse herself with. They amuse themselves with young men, singing, and if some other bride is excluded at the same time, they go and compete against her and her maids in singing.' At the enthronization of Mwaluseje's daughter described below, a dozen girls, all a little younger than herself, kept her company. Five were her own half-sisters, one was a wife of her father who had not yet reached puberty, one a daughter of her father's sister, and four were daughters of her father's neighbours.

Although a bride's hut is the centre for sex play, women who are sleeping with their husbands and are therefore 'heavy' (switi) with semen, do not enter it and may not cook for her, for any contact with them is felt to be dangerous to her. Her own mother refrains from intercourse until her daughter has gone to her husband.

The bride is not confined to the hut (as among many other African peoples) but is free to move about the immediate neighbourhood. Her movements are, however, limited by the taboo on crossing a stream, the need to avoid sexually active women, and the avoidance of her father and other men of his village, as well as her in-laws. When she leaves her hut she is accompanied by her

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

ceremonies begin; indeed, the one passes into the other. Girls are sometimes betrothed before birth, but this is usually done only when a wife has died, and the father, being obliged to supply another, offers the widower the next child to be born if it is a girl. He sends a boy to the man as a guarantee of good faith, but the boy remains only a week or so, and then returns to his home.

It may be accepted as certain that no boy comes through the dangers of adolescence unharmed. Fathers are said to warn their growing sons about these dangers, and sometimes they threaten to refuse to find wives for them if the warning goes unheeded; but nothing more is done, and the threat is never carried out.

Children's games are much too numerous for anything but a mere reference. For quiet moments, puzzles; or guessing what is in the hand of another; or what object, out of sight, is being touched. A favourite river- or lake-side sport is diving and staying under water while some one counts. Walking on the hands or on stilts is very popular.

Vampile is a ball game, with sides, the ball being thrown from one to another on the same side, while the other side endeavours to get and keep it a given number of throws, without letting it fall to the ground or into the hands of the opponents. *Ingoko* is a game not unlike our hockey, a ball being struck about, and kept as far as possible within one's own side. *Ntpilya* is played with sides sitting at a distance from a small object set up in the middle, while any round thing is thrown at it from side to side, the winning side

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

The age system of the Nyakyusa has been described in detail in *Good Company*,[1] but, since it forms the basis of their social structure, a brief explanation must here be given for the benefit of readers unacquainted with that earlier volume. Within each chiefdom there are a number of villages composed not of kinsmen but of age-mates. Villages begin when small boys of eight or ten years build together at a little distance from their fathers. They are joined by younger brothers, as these reach the age when boys stop sleeping at home, until the oldest are in their middle teens, when the youngsters will be told to begin another village. The boys of a village have their own leader, a 'natural' leader, not specifically appointed, but they are subject to the headman of their fathers' village, and formerly fought as a group under his direction. But at the 'coming out' a headman for each village is selected from among its members by the fathers: if he dies, his heir—a younger brother or son—inherits his position, so that sometimes a young man becomes headman of an old man's village, taking the name and social position of his father. Only commoners are eligible as headmen: we know one candidate who was rejected because his great-grandfather was a chief.

Two villages in each chiefdom are senior to the others and their headmen are responsible each for half of the country. During the 'coming out' ritual the chief marries two wives, 'mothers of the country', and one is established in each senior village or capital (*ikinganda*). The eldest son of these two wives are the heirs, and later divide the old chief's country between them. Most of the chief's junior wives are divided between the capitals but some may be settled in a colonising village in unoccupied country. All the chief's sons build with commoners in villages appropriate to their age, and all save the two heirs are subject to the commoner headmen of their villages. They are entitled to some respect as 'sons of the chief', and those of strong personality gain a following and settle disputes between their fellows (as may any commoner), but only the two senior sons can claim political authority.

Before the 'coming out' the villages of young men and their fathers adjoin, for the boys have built on their fathers' land, on the fringes of their fathers' villages. But at the 'coming out' there is a new deal in land. The young men are established in the centre of the country and their fathers move to the periphery; it is not merely that fathers and sons exchange land, but all the boundaries

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, 1951.